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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000030

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SUBJECT: TURKEY STILL STRUGGLING TO DEFINE RESPONSE TO US
MISSILE DEFENSE REQUESTS

REF: 09 USNATO 0584

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Doug Silliman for reason 1.4 (b, d)

Summary

1. (C) In a January 4 meeting focused largely on Missile Defense, Ambassador Jeffrey pressed Turkey's top military leaders to define more sharply their technical questions regarding the Phased Adaptive Approach and to be more specific on "precisely how NATO-ized" a system would need to be in order for assets to be based in Turkey. Deputy Chief of Staff GEN Guner said that Turkey appreciated the responsiveness of the highest levels of the USG to Turkey's MD concerns, said the briefings in U/S Tauscher's office by MDA on the debris issue were very useful and announced that the TGS had identified a new lead officer for Missile Defense. While they had not yet formed a complete response, the TGS suggested that Turkey's political leaders would be prepared to consider support to the PAA only after NATO had reached full consensus to adopt the PAA as a NATO system. The Ambassador pressed the TGS to reach out to civilian leaders responsible for Missile Defense and to ensure that the upcoming return visit of U/S Tauscher to Ankara would be productive. End Summary.

Missile Defense

2. (SBU) On January 4, the Ambassador met with Deputy Chief of the Turkish General Staff GEN Aslan Guner to follow-up on political - military issues raised in December 2009 both during PM Erdogan's trip to Washington and during the High Level Defense Group, which Guner chaired for Turkey. With Guner was Assistant DCHOD GEN Bilgin Balanli, TGS Chief of Plans and Policy LTG Yalcin Ataman, MG Alpaslan Erdogan and MG Tahir Bekiroglu. ODC Chief Maj Gen Stanley Clarke and Pol Mil Couns accompanied the Ambassador.

3. (C) The Ambassador opened the discussion on Missile Defense by pointing out that Undersecretary of State Ellen Tauscher planned to return to Turkey toward the end of January and that Turkey should use this visit as an action-forcing event to get concrete answers to specific questions on Missile Defense. The Ambassador urged the Turks to make their concerns as specific as possible; at this stage, we need to move beyond generalities. He cited the issue of Turkey's concerns about debris falling from intercepted missiles; once that concern was raised, it was addressed clearly by the Missile Defense Agency's Director LTG O'Reilly during GEN Guner's meeting with U/S Tauscher. The Ambassador pressed the Turks to provide the U.S. with their priority areas for protection; armed with this

information, U/S Tauscher's team could find out how, with what assets, and in what stage of the PAA's development these areas could be protected.

¶4. (C) The Ambassador recognized that Turkey sought NATO "cover" for its participation in Missile Defense, but he pressed the Turks to define more clearly what that meant. "How much NATO do you need" for Turkey to participate? The Turks seemed well-briefed on the troubles facing "interim capability" at NATO (ref), but LTG Ataman also made clear that Turkey's policy makers thought that the PAA should be "part of a whole NATO project" and would likely ask the U.S. to achieve full consensus at NATO before asking Turkey to step forward with contributions. The Ambassador pushed back, pressing the Turks for clear requirements of what NATO decisions in which committees would satisfy their needs. He acknowledged that the issue of Command and Control was potentially complex, but explained that the nature of Missile Defense lent itself not to long decision chains involving senior officers, but to a careful bilateral negotiation - well in advance of any action - of protocols which would delegate authority to respond to threats in a timely fashion.

¶5. (C) The Ambassador said that one of the outcomes of discussion with U/S Tauscher and A/S Vershbow was the need for a Turkish inter-agency task force on Missile Defense issues with which the USG could connect. Members of this group could travel to the U.S. for meetings with the Missile Defense Agency and other USG entities in advance of the next Tauscher visit. GEN Guner said that for the TGS, he had tasked MG Tahir Bekiroglu as the lead officer on Missile

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Defense. Bekiroglu said that he had access to a team of officers within the TGS to work on Missile Defense issues; while he did not meet on the issue outside of the military, he did have a point of contact within the Foreign Ministry.

Cobras, Predator Coverage

¶6. (C) Ambassador and Guner also reviewed Turkish PM's request for Cobras earlier and more Northern Iraq Predator coverage. Guner said these measures were essential. AMB noted that we were on the hook for an answer but this wouldn't be easy.

Comment

¶7. (C) We will continue to press the Turks to make clear their requests for information so we can make U/S Tauscher's visit to Ankara more valuable. We are concerned, however, about the TGS suggestion that Turkey may insist on full consensus at NATO before considering bilateral engagement in support of the PAA. Consensus for Interim Capability of NATO's ALT/BMD is essential to keep Turkey moving in the direction of "yes" on our requests for basing PAA assets here.
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